Family Resilience: Variations by Individual Psychological and Health Resources, Social Capital, and Demographic Dimensions

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Abstract

Resilience is a quality of families that enable them thrive after disruptive events. The purpose of this research was to examine variabilities in family resilience. Three regression models predicting family resilience produced significant results. The models showed support for the three hypotheses of the study.

Hypotheses

We theorized family resilience related to opportunities and constraints in (1) individuals' psychological well-being and health, (2) their engagement in the communities, and (3) social and demographic dimensions of age, sex, race, educational achievement, and income.

Method

Participants in this study were from rural counties in Arkansas. 812 Surveys were obtained with a 30.2% response rate. Listwise deletion of participants with missing or incomplete data resulted in a sample size of 674.

Family resilience was measured using the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire (Walsh 2015). Health was measured with a single item asking, "Overall how is your health?" Depressive symptoms were measured using the Personal Health Questionnaire eight-item depression scale (PHQ-8) (Kroenke & Spitzer, 2002). Optimism was measured using the Life Orientation Test–Revised (LOT-R) (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). Life satisfaction was measured by asking how satisfied participants were with their life. Social capital was measured by combining individual's reports of community engagement, political participation, and social network (Roper Center, 2009). An overall social capital score was calculated from the mean of each dimension. Trust was measured by asking how much participants trusted different groups of people, using a four point scale.

Results

Of the three regression models the third predicted family resilience with the best coefficient of determination. The results of the model indicated that the overall model was statistically significant ($F_{(18,655)} = 21.39$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = 0.37$). Of the individual indicators, depressive symptoms, optimism, life satisfaction, social capital, being single, and having some college education predicted family resilience. The strongest predictor of higher family resilience in Model 3 was having more optimism.

	Model 1		Model		Model 3	
	Beta	β	Beta	β	Beta	β
White	-0.11	-0.04	-0.10	-0.04	-0.07	-0.03
Age	>0.00	0.08	>0.00	0.05	>0.00	0.02
Female	0.09	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.03
Marital Status[1]						
Single	-0.27*	-0.11	-0.20*	-0.08	-0.21*	-0.09
Divorced/Separated	-0.07	-0.04	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01
Widowed	0.15	0.07	0.10	0.05	0.13	0.06
Education[2]						
High School or Less	-0.03	-0.02	0.10	0.07	0.08	0.06
Some College	0.11	0.08	0.18**	0.13	0.15**	0.11
Income (in thousands)[3]						
Less than $20	-0.39****	-0.23	-0.28**	-0.17	0.02	0.01
Between $20 and $30	-0.31***	-0.16	-0.25**	-0.13	-0.13	-0.07
Between $20 and $30	-0.29***	-0.18	-0.24**	-0.15	-0.12	-0.08
Between $20 and $30	-0.10	-0.06	-0.08	-0.05	-0.05	-0.03
Social Capital			0.31****	0.26	0.19****	0.16
Trust			-0.04****	-0.18	-0.01	-0.04
Health					>0.00	-0.01
Depression					-0.08****	-0.21
Optimism					0.25****	0.26
Life Satisfaction					0.14***	0.14
Intercept	3.95		3.64		2.34	
R-square	0.09		0.19		0.37	
Change in R-square			0.10		0.18	

*0.05, **0.01, ***0.001, ****<0.0001. [1]Married is omitted comparison category. [2]College Degree is omitted comparison category.
[3]More than $70 is omitted comparison category.